

ACTION IO-00

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INFO	LOG-00	AMAD-00	AEX-00	CPR-00	INL-00	EUR-00	UTED-00
	VCI-00	TEDE-00	LAB-01	L-00	VCIE-00	OIC-00	OIG-00
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Department for IO/S
New York for Khushali Shah

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SUBJECT: Scenesetter for A/S Silverberg's April 22-26 visit to Geneva

REF: State 61798

1. Mission Geneva welcomes A/S Silverberg and her delegation to Geneva and looks forward to the Spring 2006 Geneva Group Geneva Consultative-Level Meeting (CLM).

Geneva Issues

2. In addition to the CLM, there are a few issues under discussion in Geneva that may be raised by UN Directors in the margins of the meetings.

3. Human Rights Council: All missions are engaged in discussions on the June 19-30 inaugural session of the UN Human Rights Council. While there is general agreement that the two-week session will not allow for action on the traditional agenda of the Commission on Human Rights and that agreement on procedures and working methods is key, a number of countries are pressing for action on at least two substantive issues. Mission is actively engaged in these discussions, highlighting the importance of early agreement on procedures for the Council to ensure its future effectiveness. We have also advanced the idea of a team (2-3) of facilitators from among the PermReps in Geneva to guide the discussions and work toward consensus on concrete proposals on a program of work and on the agenda for the first session.

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-- The U.S. pledge and the Secretary's letter requesting similar pledges from other countries have engendered discussion along predictable fault lines. The majority Western Group members have made similar pledges and welcomed our effort. Members of the Africa Group have been characteristically negative, charging that the United States will violate its own pledge by supporting allies/friends with questionable human rights records.

-- There is also interest in the May 5 and May 8 appearance of the United States before the Committee Against Torture to defend its periodic report.

4. World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and World Meteorological Organization (WMO): Both are still in the process of implementing wide-ranging management reforms in response to allegations of impropriety. We are in the second year of this reform process and want to ensure the agencies are not susceptible again to embezzlement or fraud. Questions may be raised about whether the reforms at these agencies are extensive enough and if they are being adequately and thoroughly carried out.

5. International Telecommunication Union (ITU): Switzerland's Marc Furrer is a candidate for ITU Secretary-General. The election will be held in November 2006.

6. International Labour Organization (ILO): Speculation is that current ILO Director General Somavia will run for a third five-year term in spring 2008. Some say he has (unofficially) begun his campaign. Geneva Group members, some of them Somavia's fiercest critics, might be interested in U.S. views.

Geneva Group

7. Key Points: The United States is committed to it and the UK retaining co-chairmanship of the Geneva Group General and has strong interest in co-chairmanship of certain Local Groups (OHCHR in particular). At a minimum, the Geneva Group is a valuable forum to exchange information among members and with the agencies, and, as such, the United States should continue to play a leading role in the Group. The Mission believes that the Geneva Group is now at a cross-road and could emerge from this meeting revitalized, if it reaffirms its commitment to pursuing central tenets of good management and budgetary restraint at the agencies, and agrees on working methodologies.

8. Geneva Group Background: Founded in 1964, the United States and the UK are permanent co-chairs of the 15-member Geneva

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Group, which is an informal caucus of like-minded countries that contribute one percent or more of the UN assessed budget. The UN Directors of the Group meet twice a year at Consultative-Level Meetings (CLM) to determine future areas of activity and emphasis. Eighteen subsidiary Local Groups and two Focal Groups use this guidance in their day-to-day work with the agencies. Each group provides an annual report on the agency it covers as input to an Expert-Level Meeting (ELM) that drafts the Geneva Group General's report to the CLM. The ELM is usually pro forma, but if it does not result in consensus, unresolved issues are brought to the CLM for decision.

9. Internal Divisions: The Geneva Group is currently divided between countries that see it having an advocacy role (led by

the UK, U.S. and Australia) and those (led by France and Belgium) who want it to remain an informal caucus. France has complained about lack of transparency and consensus in the work of the Group. It specifically noted that the Group as a whole was not consulted before the UK and U.S. signed a letter to the WIPO DG as Geneva Group co-chairs. The U.S. shared France's concern that the Group was not given a chance to approve the UK's letter to Korea, that invited it to join the Group. It has not yet been circulated to the membership. The UK proposed the Geneva Group act jointly to pressure ILO DG Somavia on reform, but the majority of members declined to participate. Nonetheless, when the UK inquired about Somavia's availability, it referred to the Geneva Group. France also objected when the Australian co-chair convened a sub-group of the WHO Local Group to preview a proposal on changing working methods.

10. Local Group Problems: This year the UK added a series of yes/no questions to the report template. The template was discussed in advance, and some concerns were raised, particularly by France. The UK, however, did not change it. Once Local Groups began drafting their reports, the addition proved controversial and provoked a storm of complaints by co-chairs from a number of countries, including the U.S. France led the objections, mostly in opposition to the UK, and in the end refused to approve any local group reports. This refusal was primarily to ensure that its concerns about Group working methods would be fully discussed at the ELM and CLM. This issue will be the main work of this year's ELM.

11. The ELM and the Geneva Group General report: Canada will chair the ELM and draft the Geneva Group General report, which will focus on current crosscutting issues at the UN and the role of the Geneva Group. The discussion is expected to be frank and free-ranging and address the Group's ?value-added? to its

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members and the agencies, the Group's areas of competence, and whether the Group has an advocacy role. France correctly noted that the Geneva Group is a powerful trademark. If the ELM cannot agree on what that trademark is, it will forward the issue to the CLM.

12. French proposals: France has formally asked to have an agenda item "The Objectives and Working Methods of the Geneva Group" added to the second day of the CLM and provided a non-paper outlining its concerns. France intends to discuss the institutional set-up of the Group, its membership, and how best to promote the Group's common objectives.

13. UN Financing: The Japanese are putting forward a proposal on financial reform at the FAO. The Japanese provided a non-paper for their item and expressed hopes that financing of the FAO in specific and possibly the UN in general will get extensive discussion. This item provides an excellent opportunity for the U.S. to raise some of its developing ideas, including purchasing power parity (PPP).

14. UK Presentation on UN Governance: UK Ambassador Thorne will discuss its experience in trying to improve the coherence of its performance on the various governing boards of agencies throughout the system.

15. Speakers: The CLM agenda includes two invited speakers, UN DSG Mark Malloch-Brown, who will discuss the UN's reform proposals, and Prof. Mark Pieth, Volcker Commission Member, who will outline what the Volcker report means for Geneva agencies. These presentations are likely to be predictable and not provoke much discussion.

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